

Kheng language

The **Khengkha language** (Dzongkha མཁའ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྐད་ཀྱི་སྐད་), or **Kheng**,^[2] is an East Bodish language spoken by ~40,000 native speakers worldwide,^[3] in the Zhemgang, Trongsa, and Mongar districts of south-central Bhutan.^[4]

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Kheng	
མཁའ་ཤེས་ཀྱི་སྐད་ཀྱི་སྐད་	
Native to	Bhutan
Ethnicity	Kheng
Native speakers	50,000 (2013) <div>Total speakers: 65,000</div>
Language family	<div>Sino-Tibetan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tibeto-Kanauri ?<ul style="list-style-type: none">Bodish<ul style="list-style-type: none">East Bodish<ul style="list-style-type: none">Kheng</div>
Writing system	Tibetan alphabet
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	xkf
Glottolog	khen1241 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/khen1241) ^[1]

Classification

Khengkha is a dialect found in the small Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan. Khengkha is part of the larger branch of Sino-Tibetan language family but falls into the subcategories of: Tibetio-Burman, Western Tubeto-Burman, Bodish, East Bodish, Bumthang, and Khengkha.

Language codes

ISO 639-3 xkf

Glotolog khen1241^[5]

Geographical distribution

Khengkha is an East Bodish language spoken in the south-central districts of Bhutan. Khengkha is mainly found in the Sarpang district but can also be found in southwest Mongar district, rural areas in southeast Trongsa district and in Zhemgang district.^[2]

Dialects

The three main dialects in Bumthang district are Bumthap (Lower Kheng), Khempa (Middle Kheng), and Kurtop (Upper Kheng). Comprehension between the three dialects differs as Bumthap is the most similarly related language, however conversation with Kurthop is difficult.

Grammar

In most Khengkha sentences, it only marks grammatical relations through word order. The subject constituent precedes the object and the verb constituents follow it. Khengkha follows the same typology as Dzongkha. The example below demonstrates how the grammatical roles of each constituent are marked only by the position relative to the verb:^[2]

My name Dorji is.

Ngai meng Dorji wenn.

S O V

When nouns are addressed in Khengkha there are two ways it can be written, depending on the other.

1. Relatives before noun heads or articles.
2. Adjectives after noun heads.

Khengkha is an oral language without a writing system, making tones and nuances important during communication.^[2]

Language Use

Khengkha is a vigorous language in limited areas. Khengkha is not allowed to be taught in schools around Bhutan, making it only spoken at home, for commerce, local politics, and traditional religion. Due to the increasing modernization of Bhutan, there are negative attitudes towards those who speak Kheng instead of Dzongkha or the English. Lower Kheng is considered to be spoken backward, while Middle Kheng is seen as more prestigious. Middle Kheng region is the strongest and most developed economically, while lower Kheng is least developed.^[2]

Language Development

Since Khengkha is an oral language there is a low literacy rate for native Khengkha speakers in Dzongkha. There is literacy rate of 20% in Dzongkha.^[2]

Common Phrases

As there is no official English romanization of Dzongkha script, many words are spelled out phonetically. Therefore, there may be multiple spellings of the same word.

English	Khengkha	Dzongkha
Hello	Kuzu zangpo	Kuzu zangpo
How are you?	Wed ato nag yo?	Choe gadey be yoe?
My name is Dorji.	Ngai meng Dorji wenn	Ngegi ming Dorji 'ing.
It was nice meeting you.	Nga wed domsay nyeng gas a.	Chö dang je di sem ga-i.
Okay, I will see you again.	Kai nyeng dom.	Yaya, lok shu ley jel gey.
Sorry	Nyeng ma ja yai	Gom ma thay
Who	Aii yo	Ga
What	Ja yo	Gaci
When	Arba	Nam
Where	Aucu ta say/ Aun	Gate
Why	Jai bu say/ Ato bu say	Gaci bey
How	Ato	Gade
Where are you from?	Yoe ah nga yo?	Chö 'ü: gate le mo?
I am from Bumthang.	Nga Bumthang do when.	Nga Bumthang le 'ing.
I am thirsty.	Nga ka kampa	Kha khom chi.
I am hungry.	Nga tog pai say sa.	Toh ke chi.
Morning	Nga si	Droba
Afternoon	Nyen cha	Nyin-che
Evening	So suitlas	Chiru
Night	San	Numo

Below are audio recordings of the following conversation:

Khempa:

1. REDIRECT [1] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/khempa-convo>)

Dzongkha:

1. REDIRECT [2] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/dzongkha-convo>)

English translation of the conversation:

Dorji: Hi, my name is Dorji.

Sonam: Hi, my name is Sonam. Where are you from?

Dorji: I'm from Zhemgang.

Sonam: What are you doing nowadays?

Dorji: I'm studying.

Sonam: I'm happy to meet you.

Dorji: I'm also happy to meet you. Let's meet again.

Sonam: Okay.

Numerical

Khengkha counting system is written in Dzongkha script but pronounced differently. Below is a comparison of Khengkha and Dzongkha numbers.

#	Khengkha		Dzongkha	
1	Ბ	Thak	Ბ	Ci:
2	Გ	Zoom	Გ	Nyi:
3	Დ	Sum	Დ	Sum
4	Ე	Blay	Ე	Zhi
5	Ვ	Ya-Nga	Ვ	Nga
6	Ზ	Grog	Ზ	Dru
7	Თ	Ngee	Თ	Dün
8	Ი	Jat	Ი	Gä
9	Კ	Dogo	Კ	Gu
10	ᲚᲐ	Choe	ᲚᲐ	Cutham
11	ᲚᲑ	Chowouray	ᲚᲑ	Cuci:
12	ᲚᲒ	Chowazone	ᲚᲒ	Cu-'nyi
13	ᲚᲓ	Chowasum	ᲚᲓ	Cusum
14	ᲚᲔ	Choebloy	ᲚᲔ	Cuzhi
15	ᲚᲕ	Choenga	ᲚᲕ	Ce-'nga
16	ᲚᲖ	Choegrok	ᲚᲖ	Cudru

17	ཏྲ	Choerngyee	ཏྲ	Cupdün
18	ཏྲ་	Cheorjat	ཏྲ་	Copgä
19	ཏྲེ	Choedogo	ཏྲེ	Cugu
20	རྩྭ	Nyeesho	རྩྭ	Khe Ci:/ Nyishu
30	རྩྭ	Khaidehichoe	རྩྭ	Sumchu
40	ཙྰྱ	Khaizone	ཙྰྱ	Zhipcu
50	ལྱྱ	Khaizone Choe	ལྱྱ	Ngapcu
60	ཙྰྱ	Khaishum	ཙྰྱ	Drupcu
70	ལྱྱ	Khaishum ni Choe	ལྱྱ	Düncu
80	ལྱྱ	Khaiblay	ལྱྱ	Gäpcu
90	ལྱྱ	Khaiblay ni Choe	ལྱྱ	Gupcu
100	ཏྲྱྱ	Khai Nga	ཏྲྱྱ	Cikja
200	རྩྱྱ	Kai Choe	རྩྱྱ	Nyija
300	རྩྱྱ	Khai Choe Nga	རྩྱྱ	Sumja
400	ཙྱྱྱ	Nyeeshy Theg/Shipja	ཙྱྱྱ	Zhipja
500	ལྱྱྱ	Ngabja	ལྱྱྱ	Ngapja
600	ཙྱྱྱ	Drukja	ཙྱྱྱ	Drupja
700	ལྱྱྱ	Dinja	ལྱྱྱ	Dünja
800	ལྱྱྱ	Nyeesho Zone/Gopja	ལྱྱྱ	Gäpja
900	ལྱྱྱ	Gupja	ལྱྱྱ	Gupja
1000	ཏྲྱྱྱྱ	Thonthra Theg/Chigtong	ཏྲྱྱྱྱ	Cikthong

Below are audio records of Khengkha and Dzongkha numbers being spoken.

Khengkha numbers: #REDIRECT [3] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/khengkha-numbers>)

Dzongkha numbers: #REDIRECT [4] (<https://soundcloud.com/user-165950502/numbers-dzongkha>)

Writing system

Khengkha is an oral language without its own written system. But it unofficially borrows from the Tibetan script and Uchen style of writing. Khengkha and Dzongkha numerical script are written the same.

Related languages

Historically, Kheng and its speakers have had close contact with speakers of the Kurtöp, Nupbi and Bumthang languages, nearby languages of central and eastern Bhutan, to the extent that they may be considered part of a wider collection of "Bumthang languages".^{[6][7][8]}

See also

- Languages of Bhutan
- Kheng people

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External links

- Himalayan Languages Project (<http://www.himalayanlanguages.org/>)
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